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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 003255

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SUBJECT: STATUS ON THREE NORTH KOREANS

REF: A. BANGKOK 3226

Classified By: MICHAEL HONNOLD, REFCOORD, REASON 1.4 (B,D)

[1](#)1. (U) This is an action request. See para. 6.

[1](#)2. (C) On Saturday, May 27 after three North Korean (NK) women approached the Embassy Bangkok seeking resettlement to the United States, RefCoord accompanied them to UNHCR. That same day, UNHCR South Korean secondee interviewed the three women at the UNHCR office. The secondee verified the women's North Korean nationality and their interest in going to the U.S. After these interviews, the three women were escorted to the Bangkok Refugee Center (BRC), a non-governmental organization funded by UNHCR to temporarily house at risk refugees.

[1](#)3. (C) Biographical information on the three women follows:

Name: Yang Un Mi  
DOB: April 11, 1980  
Sister to Yang Un Ju

Name: Yang Un Ju  
DOB: May 13, 1984  
Sister to Yang Un Mi. Both sisters reported in their UNHCR interview that their parents are currently in the Immigration Detention Center in Bangkok.

Name: Hon Myong He  
DOB: July 6, 1967

[1](#)4. (C) Refugee Route of Travel: From the interviews of the South Korean secondee, it appears that the three NK women hired a broker to organize their travel by train and boat from China all the way to Thailand. They first crossed from China to Burma and then into Thailand via Chiangrai. The women reportedly learned of the previous six cases settled to the U.S. en route to Thailand and consequently decided to approach the U.S. Embassy. They took the overnight bus from Chiangrai to Bangkok and upon arrival at the bus terminal in Bangkok took a taxi to the Embassy by repeatedly telling the taxi driver in English, "American Embassy."

[1](#)5. (C) Other Information: On Tuesday, May 30 Deputy RefCoord notified the Overseas Processing Entity (OPE) and DHS Bangkok office of the new NK refugees. OPE is prepared to begin screening as soon as necessary. Deputy RefCoord is looking for additional interpreters among the Embassy community who may be available to assist with interpreting given that the interpreter previously used will not be available until next week. RefCoord accompanied by UNHCR staff visited the BRC and briefly met with the three North Korean women. The women appeared healthy and well cared for by the BRC. The BRC facility is small and has capacity to house only 10 refugees.

[1](#)6. (C) Action Request: Please provide guidance on whether the USG wants post to take further steps in processing these cases for U.S. resettlement. If approval is forthcoming, RefCoord will immediately seek Thai government approval and ROK background vettings.  
BOYCE